



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Rejection of Constitutional Reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 4, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Our organization has been extremely active in questions of stability in the Balkans, and in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina. And it is in this light that my delegation would like to express its disappointment to have learned that the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to pass landmark amendments to its constitution, thereby delaying a reform that is critically important for the future of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These reforms would have streamlined the office of the Presidency and created a stronger and more effective Council of Ministers and Parliament.

There were many politicians, across the political and ethnic spectrum in the country, who displayed the courage to make difficult decisions and accept compromises in supporting this reform. We commend their vision and their leadership. Unfortunately, that vision and leadership was not shared by the sixteen delegates who voted against these amendments. Those delegates voted on the side of continued ethnic separation in their country, something that only delays Bosnia and Herzegovina's full Euro-Atlantic integration. They let down their citizens, who clearly support and deserve progress toward fully functional state and government structures.

The need for these reforms will not go away; indeed it will only become more pronounced the longer reforms are delayed. The United States will continue to support reforms necessary to create a more effective and efficient Bosnian state government and hasten Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.